

SRG Supporting Document

for more detailed information, consult the grading practices handbook at grading.dmschools.org.

Core Belief and Principles

Des Moines Public Schools commit to all stakeholders to provide fair, accurate, specific, and timely information regarding student progress toward agreed-upon common standards as well as feedback for next steps and growth areas. Grades communicate what students know and can do.

What is part of my grade?

Your grade is based on how well you understand and meet the learning targets for each course. These targets are tied to specific topics or units that are aligned with state or national standards.

Why should students complete daily work, tasks, etc. if they are not graded?

Even though daily work and tasks aren't directly included in the gradebook, they help you practice and build the skills needed to meet the learning targets. Completing this work is essential for mastering the material that is part of your grade.

What will be reported by teachers in Infinite Campus?

Teachers will report your progress on learning targets in Infinite Campus. They won't include individual tasks or homework, but they will record how well you've met each learning target for the course. This helps make your grade more focused on what you've learned.

Connecting Topic Scales to the Gradebook

Here is an example of a Topic scale from Unit 1 of Modern US History:

Unit 1: Resource Acquisition and Access	
<p>In this unit learning is focused on the ways the US gathered resources for its own gain through three different examples. The first is examining the ways expansion and settler colonialism gathered resources for the country at the expense of the Indigenous communities. The second looks at how businesses hoarded the capital necessary to become powerful. The last looks at how businesses and government worked together to continue the quest for resources beyond US borders at the expense of indigenous societies. Some guiding questions we hope to answer through these inquiries include: Why does the US feel it needs to continuously expand? How does resource acquisition for the few lead to inequality? When is enough, enough?</p> <p>The unit driving question is: How did resource acquisition drive US expansion both internally and globally?</p>	
Topic	Achieving Grade Level (AT/3)
When collecting evidence related to the 3, it will be recorded in these topics in Infinite Campus.	<p>The Learning Targets (1A, 1B, etc.) are the grade level expectation for students in all classes.</p> <p>Success Criteria (under the target) is the same across buildings. Slight modifications for clarity can be made but should remain common in content and rigor</p>
Resource Acquisition and Access (6 weeks)	<p>LT1A – Evaluate the impact of US expansionism and resource extraction on Indigenous societies and cultures. (SS-US.9-12.18 & 25) CQ: Can nations share space? <i>Learning that shows evidence of progressing towards the grade-level learning target.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compare indigenous and settler belief systems about using natural resources. Make connections between methods used to extract resources from Indigenous Peoples and the impact on US national power. Form conclusions about changes in Indigenous and settler cultures as a result of resource control.
	<p>LT1B – Assess the effects of industrialists on US society. (SS-US.9-12.18 & 22). CQ: Did industrialists do more harm or good? <i>Learning that shows evidence of progressing towards the grade-level learning target.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain how industrialists used specific methods to gain economic power. Determine the impact of industrialism on American society.
	<p>LT1C – Form a conclusion about how imperialism changed the role of the US. (SS-US.9-12.19 & 24). CQ: Did imperialism promote U.S. ideals? <i>Learning that shows evidence of progressing towards the grade-level learning target.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the key motivations of US imperialism. Summarize critiques and justifications of US imperialism (using multiple sources from a range of perspectives while identifying the author's position, purpose, and limitations RH.9-10.6). Evaluate the effects of US imperialism on multiple groups of people.

In this student view of grades (below), notice the alignment between entered target-level assessments with each learning target. For Unit 1, these are the only reported scores in the Infinite Campus gradebook. Learning targets are aligned to state or national educational standards, and gradebooks reflect our Standards-Referenced Grading practices.

(1) Resource Acquisition and Access	3.0 (3%)	
Grade Total	3/100	
TOPIC SCORE	3/100 (3%)	—
Topic Score	Due: 01/17/2024	3/100 (3%) >
BODY OF EVIDENCE (not included in the grade calculation)		—
LT1C Assessment	Due: 10/30/2023	AT >
LT1B Assessment: Gilded Age	Due: 10/03/2023	AT >
LT1A Assessment (Indigenous/Settler Interactions)	Due: 09/13/2023	AT >

Student evidence of learning for each learning target is communicated through feedback language (see reverse side). These feedback language codes, boxed in green above, are used to determine a Topic Score, which informs the course grade at the end of the semester.

Feedback Language

Student evidence of learning for each learning target is recorded using feedback language:

- ET — exceeding the grade level target expectations
- AT — achieving the grade level target expectations
- PT — progressing toward the grade level target expectations
- NM — not yet meeting grade level target expectations

Why use feedback language and not numerical scores?

We want to focus our feedback on how students are progressing towards mastering the learning targets. "Replacing letters and numbers with short descriptors gives the teacher and the school the opportunity to make their expectations and their beliefs about student learning more explicit for students. They can dispel some of the baggage and abstract symbolism of letter and number grades, and by doing so, can motivate students to look at their performance and themselves differently."¹

Missing Target-Level Evidence

Each learning target is an essential grade-level, standards-aligned expectation for student learning. Therefore, the expectation is that all students engage with and attempt to show evidence of learning for every learning target.

If a student does not provide summative evidence for a learning target, the learning target will be noted as "missing" and the applicable Topic Score will be recorded as zero (0) and noted as incomplete. If one or more learning targets remain "missing" through the end of the semester, the final course grade will be an F/IE (failure due to insufficient evidence).

Multiple Opportunities to Show Evidence of Learning

Students will be allowed multiple opportunities to demonstrate proficiency. The point of education is to learn; different learners deserve different ways to demonstrate learning and, sometimes, in slightly different timeframes.

Teachers may have deadlines on tasks; however, students will have multiple opportunities to show evidence of learning. These multiple opportunities are not exhaustive and without caveat of student reflection; see the grading practices handbook for more information.

Why not traditional grading? There is little evidence to support the success of traditional grading practices. Grading based on a subjective 100-point scale is representative of task completion, not learning. Grading using feedback language with a smaller scale is more reliable than traditional grading practices. Our grading practices strive to ensure grades are fair, accurate, specific, and timely. For more information, including the body of ongoing research supporting our grading practices, please consult the grading practices handbook at grading.dmschools.org.

Determining a Topic Score

At the end of a Topic/Unit, feedback language codes are used to determine a Topic Score.

4.0	Demonstrates proficiency (AT) in all learning targets and success at exceeding target-level evidence (ET).
3.5	Demonstrates proficiency (AT) in all learning targets with partial success exceeding target-level evidence (ET).
3.0	Demonstrates proficiency (AT) in all learning targets.
2.5	Demonstrates proficiency (AT) in at least half of the learning targets.
2.0	Demonstrates progression (PT) in all learning targets. <i>Exception: ET/AT-PT-NM or ET/AT-PT-PT-NM</i>
1.5	Demonstrates progression (PT) in some learning targets.
1.0	Does not yet meet minimum criteria (NM) for the learning targets.
0	Missing evidence for one or more learning targets.

3.0 (AT in all learning targets) denotes the grade-level/standard-level expectations. These Topic Scores are averaged at the end of a semester to provide a final grade for the course.

Grade	Averaged Topic Scores
A (Honors)	3.5 +
A	3.00 to 3.49
B	2.5 to 2.99
C	2.0 to 2.49
D	1.75 to 1.99
F	below 1.75

¹ Feldman, J. (2019). *Grading for equity: What it is, why it matters, and how it can transform schools and classrooms*. Corwin.